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No Religion In Politics

A Sermon by
The Rev. Stanley Evans

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COLD WAR BURNS HUNGARY

Note On Stalin

Sung Truth

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Vol. XII, No. 6 30 cents

NO RELIGION IN POLITICS?

A sermon preached in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, Sept. 1956

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The Kingdom of the World is become the Kingdom of our God, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever

There are many rich rewards to be gained by diligent seekers in the Charing Cross Road, and one such came my way not long ago when I found a book which had been published in the year 1900 called *The Cambridge Apostles,* containing a series of pen-pictures of a group of men who had stirred the University of Cambridge in the forties and fifties of the last century.

It included the story of a clergyman who decided that he was called to a remunerative living somewhere in Mayfair and who wrote to the Bishop to commend himself for the post, stating that he thought himself well able "to adapt the Gospel to the West End."

To us this may sound surprising and even odd; in fact, the clergyman in question differed from large numbers of others only in being more honest, both with himself and with others. Indeed, the task of conducting well-to-do ladies and gentlemen to the eye of the needle, chanting the while the Magnificat in G. is one which is persevered in manfully to this day.

The fact is that the attempt to "adapt the Gospel to the West End," with the betrayal of Christian values which it involves, is one which has dogged the whole history of Christianity.

It was to be seen at work in the first century among the Christians of Jerusalem who had to be warned by St. James not to give the chief seats in their synagogues to those who were rich: it was protested against by St. Francis of Assisi, who was so overcome by the corruption of the Church which wealth induced that he refused to allow his followers even to handle a coin: it was advocated by William Wilberforce, who did so much to free the slaves but who opposed in Parliament the bill for the prevention of the sending of boys up chimneys as human brushes, and who in his *Practical View of Christianity,* elaborated the theory which was popularised for several generations in the hymn.

The rich man in his castle the poor man at his gate,
God made them high or lowly, and ordered their estate,

a perversion not merely of the gospel but even of the Anglican catechism.

It hardly needs to be stated that the "adaption of the Gospel to the West End," and all that it implies, is a fundamental betrayal of the Gospel; indeed, nobody can read any of the Gospels without realizing at once how deadly a betrayal it is.

In this present series of sermons we are asked to address ourselves to the question of politics and religion. Whenever this subject is raised there are always those ready to insist at once that between the two there is, or ought to be, no connection.

Anybody, however, who will stop to think, will realize at once that this contention is false. Politics means the ordering of our common affairs and nothing else, and it is manifestly impossible to love your neighbour as yourself if you disclaim in principle any responsibility for the affairs of all your neighoburs.

The truth is, of course, that nobody really expects the Church to do this and it is common knowledge that the Church continually takes all kinds of stands in political affairs, as resolutions of Lambeth Conferences and the British and World Councils of Churches demonstrate. The issue is confused, however, by a peculiar use of words.

If 99 clergymen print articles against Russia in their parish magazines that is normal and non-political, if one clergyman says that anything at all is good about Russia that is "political" and "dangerous." If a great number support British policy in Cyprus that passes as normal and proper: if a minority oppose it that is again regarded as political.

The fact is that the Church of England is utterly political, and the kind of politics it has tended to espouse can best be seen by looking at the voting records of the Bishops in the House of Lords. To do this for the current period would be invidious. Let us, therefore, go back to the last century.

We hear today a great deal about religious liberty, and whenever in recent years there has been any doubt as to whether such liberty was being maintained, particularly in Eastern Europe, the leadership of the Church of England has been quick to protest.

Against this it is interesting to notice that from 1800 to 1828 the majority of the Bishops opposed Catholic emancipation; that from 1830-58 they opposed the removal of disabilities from the Jews, the first rejection of repeal in 1833 being proposed by the Archbishop of Canterbury; and from 1812 to 1880 they opposed relief for dissenters or, as we now call them, Free Churchmen.

The restriction of the death penalty was again opposed by the Bishops, and the only seven who were present at a debate in 1810 opposed the abolition of the death penalty for stealing goods from shops of a value of less than five shillings. The struggle for the restriction of the death penalty went on until 1867, but no single bishop supported it.

In 1820 the Bishops opposed the disenfranchisement of the rotten boroughs and in 1831 they opposed the Reform Bill upon which so much of our modern democracy now stands. Two Bishops voted for reform and 21 against. The Bishop of Durham opposed it "because it infused a democratic influence into the legislature," and the Archbishop of Canterbury because it would be "dangerous to the fabric of the constitution."

The method of appointments in the Church of England being what it is there is nothing surprising in the fact that the Bishops have tended to reflect the outlook of the Athenæum and to vote —that they have adapted the Gospel to the West End.

We tend to obscure the Gospel with technical words. The very word Gospel is a technical term, which great numbers of people fail to understand. It means simply good news, and when we read: "Jesus came preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God" we should understand it to mean: "Jesus came preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God": Good news !

What sort of "good news" would it have been to a minor— for they hanged children in those days—who had been sentenced to execution in 1810 for stealing goods from a shop to the value of two shillings and six-pence that a bishop came and told him that he ought to hang and would hang, but that if he repented he might be saved after he were dead?

The only possible good news for such a child would be that he would not hang and that he would never again be subjected to the starvation which led him to theft. After this, and only after this, would it be possible to discuss with him spiritual salvation.

This is something we can all see—it is as plain as it could be. It is just as plain, although many of us refuse to see it, about the three young men who were hanged in Cyprus recently, and for whom the only good news would have been that they were not going to hang, and that the refusal to recognize that their community was adult and capable of governing itself, the refusal which had led them to rebellion, had come to an end.

The good news of Christ is not the "Gospel" of which we hear so much today, which tells man that he is evil and will have an end: it is the good news of forgiveness and liberation, liberation from all oppression and all evil.

The first sermon which the Gospels record Jesus as ever having preached was an announcement of this liberation, freedom for the captive, sight to the blind, a real, fundamental liberty for all.

Christian politics can only be the politics of the kingdom of God, and they are the politics for which today millions of people yearn, people who long for peace, for an elementary justice and security, for friendship and understanding between peoples, instead of a perpetual suspicion and hatred. The good news for our time is that these things can be, and can be quickly: that the liberty which is God's purpose for mankind can be brought about.

That such sickness as cancer could be abolished, so soon as we devoted as much resources to research for that purpose as we now do to nuclear warfare. The truth is that today the only thing which stands between mankind and this goal is one thing, the entrenched privilege which arises out of a dying order and the deep, vested interests which live by oppression and by the division of peoples.

(It will be objected by some that sin stands between mankind and this goal. It does, but it is a theological error of the first

order to see sin as an abstract and not as a concrete. The vested interests and privileges to which we refer and the corruption of mind and outlook which spring from them and which infest all sections of society are sin, the specific sin which has to be conquired in this field).

It follows that those who proclaim the good news of Christ's Kingdom must always be on the side of the oppressor, always on the side of the troubled and the sick.

This, of course, is political, and what we must ask of the whole Church today is that the politics which it already has should not be the politics of any political party, but should be the politics of the Kingdom of God.

Unhappily, we have to set against this what is perhaps the biggest single political fact of our time, which is that the politics of the Church are not the politics of Christ's Kingdom, but are the politics of subvervience to established authority.

Today a great cry goes up from north and south and east and west. It comes from the Kikuyu in their oppression and in their hunger for land, from the starving fellaheen of Egypt in their desperate need for a greater share of the world's resources, from Germans who do not wish to be conscripted into an army officered by S.S. men, from Italians and Frenchmen in their poverty and their need of security;

From the eastern countries with their need for friendship and understanding, from the oppressed people in South America, from black men everywhere in their need for real equality, from the British people with their need for peace and a real security;

It comes from peoples all over the world, and it comes from the past from the millions of the martyred, and it cries: Give us peace, give us liberty of body and mind and spirit, give friendship instead of the chains of hate.

To answer this cry in the name of Christ is the vocation of the Church, the real politics of Christian people. Now is the testing time of the Church upon which its whole future depends.

Let us, then, make our own the words of William Morris and give to the "voiceless wrath of the wretched" the voice and wisdom of real Christian leadership.

COLD WAR BURNS HUNGARY

Cold War Equals Class War

Most of the crimes and misdemeanors of the nations today (both capitalist and socialist) may be traced to the cold war which is simply the class war on an international scale.

The czars of private industry are instinctively aware that the mere existence of powerful socialist states is a threat to their own existence. When they hear the word co-existence they froth at the mouth because they realize that for them this means, ultimately, no existence. If they had any real faith in the validity of their own claim to universality they wouldn't worry so much and

they wouldn't be forever reaching for their gun holsters.

As long as this cold war period lasts the nations serving the international cartels will strive to undermine socialist and socialist-oriented states wherever they can and will not hesitate an instant to install fascist regimes in their place, nor will they hesitate to use the church as an instrument in achieving their end. They did it in Spain, in Greece, in Guatemala, in Korea, in Formosa. And they would certainly have done it long since in Poland and Hungary if the Russian power had not been there to thwart them. The sudden emergence of the Hapsburg partisan, Cardinal Mindszenty in Hungary was clear indication that the Vatican-Wall Street influence was still at work in that country and ready to take advantage of the liberalizing yeastings released by the Krushchev movement in Russia.

The Education of Miss Kethly

Anna Kethly, leader of the Social Democratic Party in Hungary and member of the cabinet of Imre Nagy, the premier who lost control of the revolution and had to call on the Russians to help him quell the uprising, has been in New York addressing a mass meeting at Madison Square Garden called to protest against the Russian action. It is unlikely that she knew the exact nature of the meeting since she is pictured on the platform giving the united front salute of the closed fist. It was the wrong salute for that meeting. The fascist salute would have been more appropriate. "This revolution," she said, "which is being conducted by the people of Hungary is not intended to be the beginning of a new war but the beginning of the often-mentioned co-existence."

She must have been stunned when at the mention of that hated word she was drowned in a roar of boos so loud and prolonged that the chairman had to intervene. Here in front of her was visual and audible evidence of what, if reported in Hungary, would be called communist propaganda. We can only hope that Miss Kethly got the point, and that after the meeting was over perhaps someone spelled out for her its sponsorship, about fifty patriotic, religious and refugee organizations, in their political coloration ranging from mild to fanatic fascist. Cardinal Spellman (supporter of the hated Hapsburgs) sent his representative, Bishop Griffith. "American Century" Luce, Major General "Wild Bill" Donovan, Msgr. Bela Varga of the Hungarian National Council whose foreknowledge of the uprising (he predicted it on Oct. 24, in an interview with the N.Y. Herald Tribune) would have given Miss Kethly something to think about, spoke at the meeting along with the heirs of the dynasties of wealth, Gov. Harriman and Angier Biddle Duke. And the crowl chanted "Arms for Hungary" and "We want action!"

The Bitter Fruit of Shuster

Articles have been appearing recently in our newspapers, re-

printed from the N.Y. Herald Tribune, by Dr. George N. Shuster, President of Hunter College, New York, lauding Cardinal Mindszenty as the symbol of Hungarian resistence to Soviet repression. In 1933 this Dr. Shuster, then an editor of *Commonweal,* welcomed the coming of Hitler to power and approved the Vatican's rallying to his banners. In 1947 this same Dr. Shuster, addressing the Charles Carroll Catholic Forum in Washington on the subject "The Christian Social Movement in Europe Today" advocated the training of a corps of hardboiled young gangsters to infiltrate behind Communist lines in Europe.

Dr. John Codington, our correspondent in Washington, took notes at this meeting and was deeply impressed by Dr. Shuster's malignancy. He spoke repeatedly of the necessity of getting rid of "sweetness and light" and of training "tough-fibred" men to go out in the mud, march up the hill and "put the bayonet at the end of the rifle." Dr. Shuster was introduced at that meeting by Dr. Charles O'Donnell of the State Department and of the Department of Politics at Catholic University, Washington, D.C. In this connection it should be borne in mind that the State Department in riddled with Vatican agents at all levels, from rookie to ambassador.

Nor should it be forgotten that the US Central Intelligence Agency, according to the N.Y. Times a collossal espionage system with 22 separate buildings in Washington alone and a far-flung network of foreign bases and a no-limit budget, has been promoting counter-revolution in Hungary since 1945. The CIA is only one, perhaps the leading one, of a host of public and private organizations devoted to warming up the cold war and preparing the hot war. Just prior to the attack on Korea (June 20, 1950) under a bill approved by the President, the CIA received "unprecedented authority to conduct its affairs in the utmost secrecy" (N.Y. Times).

Since its affairs are conducted secretly the American people and the world at large cannot know exactly what it is doing at any particular time, but they can be sure it is implementing American foreign policy which has moved from Truman's containment to Eisenhower's roll-back of Soviet influence in Eastern Europe. And Hungary is in Eastern Europe. Now we learn that youth had an unusually large part to play in the Hungarian revolution, especially in its later developments.

It may be that Dr. Shuster's suggestions bore fruit. And this may account for the cries of pain in our press at the frustration of such carefully nurtured hopes. There were no cries of pain at the bombing of the people of Egypt by British planes.

What Forced the Russian Hand?

When the Kremlin let loose the long-dammed flood of decentralization through Krushchev's revelations concerning the Stalin era and through the rapprochment with Tito it probably

underestimated the power and drive of counter-revolutionary forces in Hungary and their illusive hopes derived from the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, and the US balloons over Hungary.

Two things forced the Russian hand in Hungary: First, the general exigencies of the cold war and the threat of atomic annihilation from the West had compelled Russia immediately after the anti-nazi war to form the cordon sanitaire, the ring of buffer states between her and that threat. Second, Hungary occupied a key position in this defensive ring and was being catapulted straight into the arms of fascism by an emigre-Vatican-Wall Street combination.

The Hungarian people, on the other hand, had been definitely justified in their attempt to reform their government in the direction of greater autonomy. They were merely acting in the spirit of the new developments in Russia. Nor would Russia have acted against them had not something new been added, namely clerical fascist counter revolution. Suddenly Cardinal Mindszenty was pushed forward as the symbol, if not leader, of the revolt. This man stood for medievalism. A monarchist, supporter of the Hapsburgs, he had fought the land reform, state schools, freedom of religion. It was then that the "hard" elements in the Kremlin prevailed and the revolt was crushed by Russian soldiers who were unable to distinguish between legitimate reformers and counter revolutionary fascists. The revolution was turning into a civil war in which the Americans were taking part, openly as far as words went, secretly as far as deeds went. Asked by reporters what part he would play in the revolution, Mindszenty replied, "After all, I am the Prince Primate." This meant that he fully expected to be vice-regent of Hungary.

Of course deeds will be denied by the US government, but remember the testimony of Colonel Robert Vogeler of the American Intelligence to the effect that American companies, among them the International Telephone and Telegraph Company and the Standard Oil Company, had conducted sabotage against the infant republic from 1945 until his arrest in 1950. Vogeler named members of the American Legation and described the organization of American Intelligence in Vienna as a center for Southeast Europe, all active in preparing the ground for an aggressive war. Later, when freed, he denied these statements, but he was an Intelligence officer and as such must deny everything. As the N.Y. Times article on the CIA says, "There are no medals for heroes on the secret front in the cold war. The government cannot even admit they are its agents . . . If a spy system is not secret it is worthless."

So deeds will be indignantly denied, but we may depend upon it, deeds there were. For there has been in existence for a whole decade a cold war, a war not alone of propaganda and of espionage but of sabotage and of active preparation for the capture by force of foreign governments. In this war there have been no

moral inhibitions at work. It was the same Wild Bill Donovan of the Madison Square Garden meeting who once said that when you are fighting for survival (as in the cold war) morals don't count. Well, apparently the Kremlin agrees, for they have interpreted the Hungarian situation in the light of a fight for survival. Hungary itself, the Hungarian people, don't count when the survival of the great powers is the issue. The Hungarian people would have worked out their own salvation in their own way if both the great powers had left them alone. In accordance with their unique genius they would have contributed much wisdom to the nations struggling to cross the difficult terrain from competitive to co-operative forms of life. This was not to be, at least not at the present time, because geography put Hungary in a place where it could not help function as a link in a defensive chain. A defensive chain has no function if there be no offensive threat. The defensive chain was Russia's. The offensive threat was the USA. When the defensive link is destroyed and replaced by an offensive spear what then shall the defender do? Is there an alternative to the act of repairing the link? Yes there is one alternative: suicide. The eagle invited the bear to suicide and the bear said no. With an emphasis that spelled injustice and oppression to many Hungarians. Such are the contradictions of power politics. The bear said no and the eagle screams.

Russia's Mistake

Some say (Tito among them) that Russia made a cruel mistake in returning her armies to Hungary after she had promised to remove them. Perhaps she should have taken the risk of losing Hungary to the West. If the Russian army had been pulled out and Hungary had gone fascist, then, *after Hungary had become fascist,* Russia might have been in a better moral position with regard, for instance, to the French-British attack on Egypt. Some progressives say this, just as they said at the time of the Korean war that the North should have waited until the Southern armies were a good long distance into Northern territory before striking back, so that the world would not have been in any doubt as to who was the aggressor. There is a cartoon in the Chirstian Science Monitor which illustrates this point. It shows Russia standing on a fast shrinking world marked "World Confidence in Russia's Good Faith" or something along that line. But the trouble with this idea is that whatever Russia does is in the eyes of the anti-Soviet West always wrong. And if she had not done it she would still have been wrong. If she is friendly it is because she is enagaged in an aggression of friendship: if she's peaceful it is a peace offensive. Confidence in Russian good faith has long been non-existent in these parts and therefore cannot shrink.

However, there are more important things than the West's opinion of Russia. One is the East's opinion, and another is Russia's opinion of herself. There is evidence that the Russian

forces in Hungary were unhappy in their task. On several occasions replacements were required for soldiers who were fraternizing with the revolutionaries. This is bound to have an effect within Russia itself, now swept by a spirit of freedom which, when it gets itself translated into effective law, will carry the Russian Revolution forward to new heights of achievement.

Will Russia Leave Hungary?

As at the time of Tito's defection the Russians had gotten out of touch with realities in Yugoslavia, so now they have miscalculated the temper of the Hungarian people and also underestimated the persuasive power and drive of clerical reaction. So far were they out of touch that it is quite possible (we are not informed on this) that there was an incipient white terror. If there was then it must have seemed that another Horthy or worse was imminent. A whiff of white terror would have presented no alternative to sharp repression. The mistakes, economic and psychological, had been made previously. They led inevitably to actions inconsistent with socialism, with democracy, with decency. Cruel as the repression was, however, it was a stabilizing action: it upheld the government in being. It did not attack the government as was the case in Guatemala and more recently in Egypt.

The clerical fascist putsch having been thwarted, will the Russian armies be pulled out of Hungary? We believe they will. Only one thing will stop them: the possible discovery of US plans for a bomber base there. Apart from such a threat their position in Hungary is a false one. We make this one hypothecation because, although the purposes for which military strength can be used are constantly changing and the defensive value of border states may be diminishing, to give US atomic bombers a base so near the Soviet border is more than could be expected.

Egypt: The Lion is Nervous

Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., the American delegate to the UN, differentiated between the Russian act and the British attack on Egypt to the advantage of Britain. Within the framework of power politics both acts were of a defensive nature. The difference was that one was in defense of national survival and the other bombed civilians. One supported a tottering government, the other tried to upset a government.

Commentators in the West were gentle with Eden. Not so in the East. The *Straits Times* of Singapore, largest English language newspaper in Southeast Asia and normally pro-British, had this to say (Nov. 1, 1956):

"Sir Anthony Eden never poured oil on troubled flames before. He has done so now with an imperial gesture. He has divided the British public, shattered what was left of the American alliance, divided the Commonwealth, horrified the United Nations, and increased immeasurably the perils he was seeking to avoid.

"He has thrown away Britain's moral position on the Suez, assured himself of the blazing animosity of the Arab world, lost Britain her last friend (except the French) and perhaps put British troops in a death trap. He has done it all for the safety of the Suez Canal which is likely to be the center of the battlefield and to preserve access to the Middle East's oil, which is now waiting for the Arab torch."

Lodge, while mildly deprecating the British-French attack, waxes hotly indignant and preaches morality at the Russians, but Lodge should remember the precedent his own country gave the Russians when the US crushed the Guatemalan people's government in 1954. Where were the lamentations in our press over the plight of the "brave people of Guatemala"? If the clerical fascists had won the day in Hungary and the outworks of Soviet defence had crumbled would we perhaps be treated to a "fact article" such as the one written for the N. Y. Times (July 18, 1954) by Flora Lewis revealing how Ambassador Peurifoy had been sent to Guatemala by Washington to "get rid of the Reds." (The "Reds" happened to be mild Roosevelt New Dealers). "Decisions had to be made instantaneously, sometimes in a setting of well-oiled tommy guns, Peurifoy poked a pistol in a shoulder holster and lengthened his stride." To most readers Peurifoy was a straight-shootin' clean-cut red-blooded Gary Cooper. To the Guatemalan people and to many others he was the agent of murderous tyranny. Even the cautious CCF party of Canada condemned the "aggressive armed attack against the legitimate government of Guatemala by reactionary military elements, backed by the United Fruit Company and the US State Dept." Two years have passed and Guatemala has never ceased to suffer torture as a consequence of this act. But we bring it up here to point out that if the Peurifoys of today had won the battle for Hungary what rejoicing there would be in the press of America and what stories would be told of the heroes in the fight! In that earlier battle a clerical fascist government was fastened around the necks of the Guatemalan people ;and it was but one battle in a war in which the USA has officially declared its intention to roll back Communist power everywhere and has unofficially but undeniably and repeatedly exposed its intention to destroy the USSR. It was one battle and Hungary was another and since Hungary was lost its story cannot be told.

Undercover Losers Never Lived

The press agony over the US failure in Hungary is a pretty sure sign that there was more to the revolt than meets the eye. The US propaganda heard and read in Hungary (Voice of America, balloons, etc.) certainly gave the people there the "impression the Yanks would be coming." (Editorial, N.Y. World-Telegram-Sun, Nov. 6, 1956). "We talked of liberation without hard thought

about methods of accomplishing this," says C. L. Sulzberger (N.Y. Times, Nov. 7, 1956).

But the US did more than talk. It acted too. Only its actions have been necessarily secret. And therefore these commentators politely ignore them. Undercover activity can be owned up to, even honored, when it succeeds in its task. When it fails it must be disowned and disavowed. Its operatives, unlike soldiers who die on the battlefield and whose names are inscribed on a cenotaph, are as if they had never existed. That is the terrible penalty of undercover work and it is the very fact which enables a nation to deny its existence. We are not privy to secrets of any kind, but the CIA and similar organizations are big factors all over the world. Their budgets are enormous. They implement American anti-Soviet policy. We have seen what they could do and did in Guatemala on a schedule that was fulfilled within 45 minutes of its due hour. Are we to believe that *nothing* was done in Hungary to prepare and help accomplish our expressed purpose there?

NOTE ON STALIN

An Individual is an Undivided Person

Robert Burns was not an example of copy book morals, neither was Charles Dickens. Shelley abandoned his wife and Wordsworth abandoned not only his girl but a Revolution. Browning was a social snob. Turner was a dirty drunk. Francis Thompson was a drug addict. You may add to this list at your will. All these men accomplished works which are among the universally loved treasures of mankind. Moreover, put any of them into a position of absolute power and dear knows what would have become of him.

This does not mean that drunkenness or faithlessness are to be excused. I tdoes mean that Turner's masterpieces are not to be downgraded because of his personal habits. Dostoyevsky didn't write "The Idiot" *because* he was a compulsive gambler, and yet *on the surface* there was a connection, fo rhe did write under the drive of a gambler's passion for money with which to gamble. The Reformation in England was connected *on the surface* with the appetites of Henry the Eighth and therefore was accompanied by much injustice and suffering. But there was more to Henry than appetites, monstrous as these were. Genius is a heavy burden and it chooses strange victims.

In attacking the cult of the individual these days some theoreticians are going too far. They are abolishing the individual. When you abolish the individual you abolish responsibility. Everybody sinks into the anonymous mass. There are no waves. Just a dead calm. We must not cease to appreciate the role of the individual who bears on his flesh the mark of humanity and of that something in humanity which pulls humanity forward, that something that transcends humanity and might be called by another name. He is the individual on whom men lay their burdens

and whom men force ahead on the road of their progress. In him flows the deep stream of history.

In politics too he is this individual. Here his medium is not a canvas, a manuscript, but a nation or an empire. The dimension of his power is multiplied. What would have been a merely personal fault with a small range of consequences becomes in the political ruler an enormity and in an autocrat it takes on the proportions of a universal calamity. In a democracy there is a descending staircase from power. In a dictatorship there is only the trapdoor of death, there is no peaceful way down from eminence. But whether in a democracy or a dictatorship the genius of politics, be he Lincoln or Ivan the Terrible, is the instinctive agent of history, of human development.

We may talk glibly of collective leadership, and there may be times when it will work, but they are not times of crisis. Occasionally we find a constellation of individual leaders who may resemble a collection from the outside; but each member of such a group will function properly only as an undivided center or source of responsible action, that is, as an individual. Mikoyan is such an individual. Krushchev is certainly one. And, growing out of the very old and rich Chinese tradition, we have Mao Tse-tung, Chu Teh, Chou En-lai, each moving from within himself, not as a fraction or appendage of another. But the self from within which he moves is identified with the self of history, the self of mankind on the march, the self that takes account of each individual in the mass of mankind.

Lenin was such an individual. Was Stalin? Stalin was crippled in body, he was "rude" and was feared by Lenin. He was not a Russian. Tasks had been laid on him in the early days of the revolution which developed unfortunate traits in his character. Yet the second quarter of this century will likely stay in the history books as the Stalin Era.

This is not to take any merit from Krushchev's denunciation of Stalin's crimes and misdemeanors. In denouncing them he ranged himself on the positive side of Stalin's achievements.

Our Horror is Hollow

Stalin was the determining force in building socialism in Russia. Not egalitarian socialism, not politically democratic socialism, but socialism with the seeds of equality and political democracy firmly planted in it, to be germinated and nourished by education, literature, and the laying of the economic base for general welfare. This was done in the face of world hostility wihch reached a climax at the time of Hiroshima, when Russia having gone through Gethsemane as a faithful ally of the West, the West answered by hoarding atomic secrets, using them to crowd her out of the Eastern settlement, summarily cut off UNNRA, built 500 anti-Soviet bases throughout the world, staked out the Pacific Ocean as an American lake and China as an American

colony, loaded the UN with anti Soviet votes, and began to rebuild Nazi power in Europe. When Stalin found out that he, the ever watchful cunning one, had been trapped in the shell game of power politics, he may well have been driven into a state of mind in which his retention of power became dangerous for Russia and for the world.

How we roll our eyes to heaven in reciting Stalin's panic murders, his cruel transportation of peoples from their homes! And how easily we swallow Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the exile of Pacific Islanders and the napalm massacre of the Korean people.

The statesmen who used Stalin and double-crossed him committed crimes as great and as inexcusable as his, and their crimes, committed in an attempt to hold back history, were in many cases the direct cause of his. Stalin made the future possible. Russia is not the future, not yet, but the future owes its existence to Russia. All forward looking progressive men and women everywhere have for four decades drawn strength from Russia, looked with hope to Russia, leaned hard on Russian power.

What should be noted and noted sharply just now is that in Russia *(where it is operative)* the people are shaken to the foundations of their being by a revulsion from police tyranny, whatever its origin or excuse, whereas in America a landslide vote has chosen as leader the man who gave the go-sign on Heroshima.

That is why our expressions of horror over Stalin's crimes ring hollow.

SUNG TRUTH

Truth Is, Does, Sings

Ecumenical means universal, catholic, inclusive, total. Truth is universal. Truth is total. But the total truth can never be captured in a prose statement of it. Like the facets of a fly's eye these statements are flat and give a flat and always partial picture of the truth. Truth must be acted or sung to be grasped. The parables of Jesus, being stories of action, are seed-beds of truth. But Jesus comforting the sick is truth itself. The cup of water to the thirsty, that is truth, home to the orphaned child is truth. Truth is never abstract, always concrete, unique.

Some people think they can trap the truth in prose statements. They may be theist or the ymay be atheist statements. And, thinking to possess the total truth in their catechisms and atheist pronunciamentos they exclude from that total truth all who do not accept the hospitality of their church or society. Those churches and societies are most catholic that admit all creeds on the theory that they all express in greater or less degree *some aspect* of the truth. However, aspects of the truth are not truth itself, which *is* an act and *speaks* in a song. Add up *all* the aspects and still you will be further from the truth than the gesture, the act of small kindness or the broken song.

Poetry and Mathematics

We do not speak here of mensurable truth, the mathematics which underlies all science. Dr. Dirk J. Struik, the well-known mathematician of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in a beautiful address delivered at the First Unitarian Church in Los Angeles, said, "Theologians, logicians and mathematicians have met each other on the trail." And he quotes St. Augustine's "correct description of what we call the actually infinite—the infinite considered as achieved, as the line with its points." To which we would venture to comment that here the theologian ceased being the theologian and became a mathematician. This is not to say that a mathematician should never theologize; and it is less to say that a mathematician may not be a poet in his mathematical endeavour. But the poetry of mathematics cannot be expressed mathematically. As Dr. Struik himself says, "... the great questions of love and hatred, good and evil, life and death cannot be cast into the form of axioms and theorems." It is difficult to think of an axiom emblazoned on a banner or a theorem drawing tears or moving one to passionate endeavour. The very bareness of these forms of expression, however, has its own beauty. Moreover the exact sciences never cease to persuade men to world unity and peace, as Dr. Struik points out. If an axiom lacks flesh, it also lacks race and color and pride.

The Dividends of Poetry

But to return to song or poetry: the point is that its only dividents, its only function or use, is itself, to be itself. At a ceilidh once a man stood with his back to the doorjamb and sang "The Red Haired Man's Wife." Why did he do it? Not for money, praise or fame. His audience (he was as much his own audience as anybody else in the room) didn't comment on his singing, they talked of the song. There was truth in the song, it was poetry. The air struck it to the heart without accompanying instrument. The hearers would simply not have understood the question; what do you get out of it? They had presented themselves with a piece of life itself with its mystery, its terror, its glory. That was enough.

How can you tell a poem anyway when you see one? How can you recognize the real thing from the hundreds of verses that draw their skirts from neighboring columns in magazine and newspaper? It is impossible to tell, if you lack the Inner Light. If your Inner Light is smoky then you are finished as a judge of poetry. You may apply the test of the rules of verse making, but that won't get you very far, for there is more poetry in the abandoned toss of a child's head than in many an exquisitely carved sonnet.

In a real poem, rhythm and form are born from within. Afterwards botanists tear the thing to pieces, count its petals, write lists of words describing its color and form; but the poem must

have grown as the rose has grown, keeping its secret safe in its own heart.

The Bible is Poetry

A great poem is always a mystical document, a "testimony" as we used to say in prayer meeting. Last week your car was laid up a day or two, and a whim took you walking up the citadel on your way home from work. A mist and falling smoke reddened the early lamps in the tiny shops. The shout of a newsboy drifted up from the distance, vending the day's crime. The bells of St. Paul's suddenly broke forth upon the gathering dusk with their crisp sweetness telling gladness from an old time . . . and suddenly you too felt glad, bells rang in your soul and rocked it with an unaccustomed feeling of exaltation and enlargement. You were "with it" as the youngsters say. And "it" was with you. The sadness of the world and the gladness and something beyond sadness and gladness. Such an experience pressed out in the pulsing language of poetry becomes a poem and a poem is a blazing light and guide to reality. The Bible is poem after poem. We say it is written by God and we mean by that that it was not composed, it welled out of hearts too full, it cried itself from choking throats, and it spoke always of the inner heart of life.

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NEW CHRISTIAN

NOV.-DEC. 1956

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